

FOREWORD

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is required to make certain funding and implementation decisions associated with the ongoing Region-wide fish and wildlife mitigation and recovery efforts. This Fish and Wildlife Implementation Plan (FWIP) final environmental impact statement (EIS):

- summarizes and inter-relates the many regional proposals and sets of actions intended to facilitate fish and wildlife mitigation and recovery;
- provides the BPA Administrator and the public with a broad-based analysis of the possible environmental consequences of funding and implementing decisions now, and into the future, with respect to the natural, social, and economic environments; and
- allows the Administrator an opportunity to use a comprehensive, consistent, and unified planning approach to review and make decisions over time to guide BPA's role in the regional fish and wildlife mitigation and recovery efforts.

It has taken considerable effort to prepare a thorough policy-level analysis, ensuring both opportunity for public review and a thoughtful process for BPA to make an initial decision on the most appropriate Policy Direction to follow. The information in this EIS provides an understanding of the history of fish and wildlife policies in the Region and illustrates the policies, choices, and impacts inherent in BPA's ongoing mitigation and recovery work. Because no EIS with this scope could anticipate the specifics of future events such as court decisions, national policy directives, or critical habitat designations, this document instead shows how to apply its analysis to analogous qualitative changes of the different Policy Directions and their potential constituent actions. These relationships between the alternatives and their impacts will change slowly, if at all, and allow decisionmakers to rely on this EIS for many years.

BPA recognizes that not all interested parties in the Region may be satisfied with the decision(s) that it makes now or in the future regarding fish and wildlife funding and implementation. While BPA will make a decision now based on current policy positions in the Region, it will review, on a periodic basis, the status of the mitigation and recovery efforts. BPA will revisit its Policy Direction decision to determine if changes and modifications are required.

When, for any reason, a chosen Policy Direction is changed or modified, this EIS is designed to help fully inform the BPA Administrator, or any other decisionmaker using this EIS, of the potential environmental consequences of such course-correction decisions. This EIS is not meant to replace, revisit, or prejudice any of the other major fish and wildlife recovery processes in the Pacific Northwest. Instead, it is intended to integrate and complement all these efforts, which have undergone or are undergoing substantial public scrutiny through other Federal, state, or tribal plans or program reviews.

Finally, the EIS establishes a procedural "roadmap" for BPA funding and implementation of future site-specific actions within the scope of the broader policy decisions. By using a tiered public process on more site-specific actions, BPA will be able to make decisions in a more consistent, focused, and timely manner, while ensuring full compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The intended result is a BPA decisionmaking process that better aligns implementing actions with the broad policy direction.

BPA hopes that this EIS, through its public participation and follow-on processes, will also help other public officials better understand the environmental consequences of the Region's widespread fish and wildlife mitigation and recovery decisions and ultimately promote actions that protect and enhance the human environment and mitigate for past, present, and ongoing effects upon it.